


LAGUNA HILLS HIGH SCHOOL

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April 10, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

The news is grim in California! By some estimates 100,000 teachers are going to retire or leave the profession in the next decade. We need help and the only way we are going to get it is one enthusiastic teaching candidate at a time. As a full time high school physics teacher and a part time University of California – Irvine secondary science teaching methods instructor, I have the good fortune of working with future science teachers on a regular basis. Ariel Levi Simons is the most outstanding of the scores of teacher candidates that I've mentored over the past six years.

We first met in the summer of 2007 at an orientation meeting at UCI. Subsequently, Levi was assigned to me for his initial science class observation. I was immediately impressed with his congenial personality, depth and breadth of knowledge, and astute observations of student and teacher interactions and behaviors. From his first day in my classroom, Levi exhibited a calm sense of belonging. Perhaps, it was because he was comfortable being around adolescents due to his experience tutoring high school students the previous year. Maybe, it was two years of experience as a teaching assistant in the UCI physics department. Regardless, Levi is undaunted by the prospect of teaching high school physics.

Levi has always had a profound interest in science and mathematics and pursued them at the Illinois Institute of Technology where he received his bachelor degree in physics. He earned admission to the PhD program at UCI and, after two years of academic work, came to the realization that he had a greater passion for teaching than for research. That was good news for the teaching profession.

Levi possesses abundant tools for teaching high school physics. He has completed a rigorous course of study and his research experience, which traces back to his own high school days, allows him to speak with the authority of a scientist. His ample computer skills will help him build robust lessons employing tools ranging from laboratory probe ware to the endless resources of the world wide web. Levi's finely tuned analytical skills will allow him to quickly and carefully assess his students' learning and adjust his teaching methods to insure enduring learning.

As one of Levi's methods instructors I have the opportunity to see him work with his fellow student teachers on a regular basis. Last fall, he did not hesitate to volunteer to serve as our student teacher cohort's representative to the education department. It may seem minor, but he

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